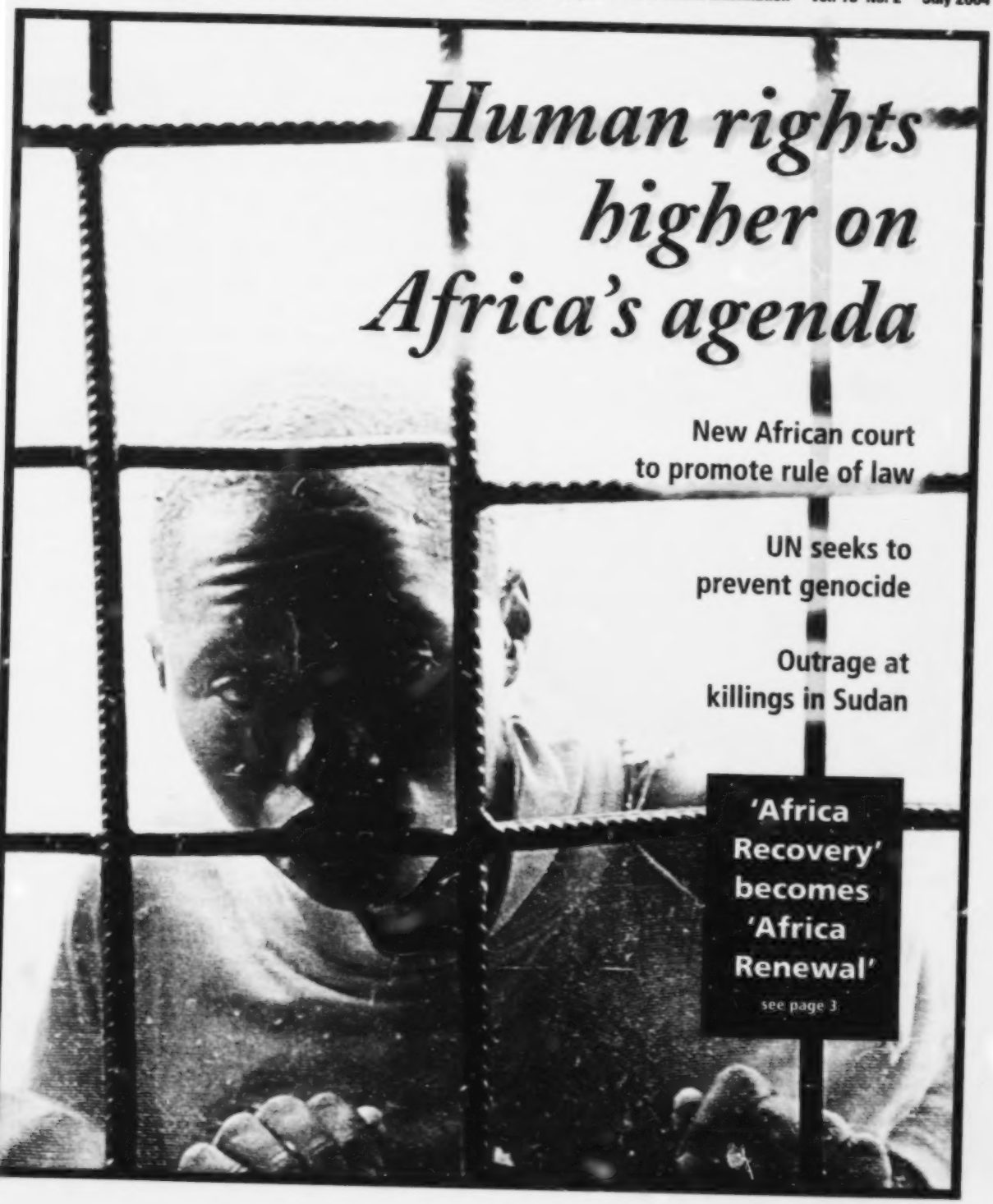
AFRICA RENEWAL

Formerly 'Africa Recovery' United Nations Department of Public Information Vol. 18 No. 2 July 2004



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New African court to promote rule of law

UN seeks to prevent genocide

Outrage at killings in Sudan

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Africa Renewal is printed on recycled paper.

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A message to readers

'Africa Renewal' for a changing Africa

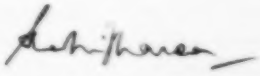
Beginning with this issue, *Africa Renewal* is the new name for the magazine long known as *Africa Recovery*. The change comes at a time of profound transformations in Africa — and in the way the United Nations and the rest of the international community relate to the continent.

After decades of stagnation and malaise, a new determination is emerging to move Africa forward. Most countries now have democratically elected governments. A stronger regional organization, the African Union, is being built, to provide a more effective means for resolving armed conflicts, integrating African economies and promoting Africa's interests globally.

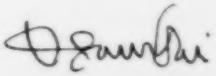
African leaders have devised a forward-looking plan, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which sets out an ambitious "agenda for renewal." NEPAD recognizes that progress will come not only through increasing the continent's growth rates — "recovery" in the language of the economists — but also through advancing human development in its broadest sense. Through NEPAD, Africa's leaders are aiming to harness the enormous potential and talents of their people and chart a course towards continental rejuvenation. On the basis of that vision, the New Partnership has been embraced by the United Nations and other international actors as the framework for their solidarity and assistance.

From its inception in 1987, *Africa Recovery* magazine, published by the UN's Department of Public Information, focused on tracking and analyzing the efforts of Africans and their external partners to revive economic growth and promote human development. Unlike international media outlets that focus mainly on tales of war, famine and disease, the magazine has sought to convey the richer, more complex reality of Africa today. It has noted the continent's many daunting problems. But it also has highlighted Africans' heroic efforts to overcome adversity and the tangible successes they have achieved so far.

In the spirit of partnership exemplified by NEPAD, these aspects of the magazine's mission remain as relevant as ever. By now changing its name to *Africa Renewal*, the publication seeks to identify itself more squarely with Africa's new dynamic of initiative and rebirth. Without losing sight of the difficulties that continue to trouble Africa, it will reflect a continent on the move, with leaders more open to defining and addressing the priority needs of their people — and with more conscious and organized civil societies intent on making sure that happens. As NEPAD emphasizes, Africans are increasingly determined to "shape their own destiny," while welcoming partnership with the international community. *Africa Renewal* will serve as a tribune for discussion of their endeavours.



Shashi Tharoor
Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information



Ibrahim Gambari
Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa

South Africa marks a decade of freedom

Progress in many areas, but legacy of inequality runs deep

By **Ernest Harsch**

Ten years ago, South Africa's first democratic election brought an end to one of the world's most reviled systems of racial domination. For the first time, representatives of the country's oppressed African majority took the reins of power. Despite fears by many whites that the new authorities might seek vengeance, the government of President Nelson Mandela instead pursued a path of national unity and reconciliation.

"We chose what seemed impossible," Mr. Thabo Mbeki, the current president, said on 27 April 2004, the tenth anniversary of that historic election. "To have done otherwise would have condemned all our people, black and white, to a bloody and catastrophic conflict. We are proud that every day now, black and white South Africans discover that they are, after all, one another's keeper."

While democracy is now more entrenched and racial tensions have been reduced in political life, South Africa has not yet been able to surmount its deep social and economic divisions. There remains an enormous gap between the haves and the have-nots, acknowledges President Mbeki; there are in effect two economies "without a connecting staircase." Overcoming the political legacy of the hated apartheid system has proved far easier than tackling its inherited economic and social injustices.

To help reduce shortages of housing for poor blacks, some 1.6 mn new homes have been built in the last decade

Political and social advances

South Africa has fashioned a very open and inclusive political system. The country has a vocal and extensive independent press, there is broad freedom of political association and leaders can be openly criticized and are held to account for their conduct. The constitution, formulated after wide public discussion, is recognized by many human rights advocates as one of the most progressive in the world.

Despite South Africa's exceptionally violent past, it has made it through the first decade of freedom "without having experienced any violent racial conflict," noted an anniversary statement by the ruling African National Congress (ANC).

Conscious efforts to promote women's participation in decision-making also were undertaken. In the third post-apartheid general election on 14 April — in which the ANC won a 70 per cent majority — the proportion of women parliamentarians edged up slightly, from 30 to 33 per cent. Only 10 other countries in the world have a higher percentage. The new cabinet has 21 female ministers and deputy ministers — 41 per cent of the total. The ANC also has named women to fill four of the nine provincial premier posts.

When the ANC came to power in 1994, its election platform included the ambitious Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which set out sweeping social and economic reforms for the impoverished black majority. The RDP later lost its central place in the government's policy framework and the promises proved more difficult to fulfill than originally anticipated. Nevertheless, in his annual budget presentation to parliament on 18 February, Finance Minister Trevor Manuel was able to point to a number of achievements over the past decade, implemented in the spirit of the RDP:

- 1.6 mn homes built
- 700 new primary health clinics constructed and 212 upgraded; 215 mobile clinics established
- clean water supplies extended to 9 million more people
- the number of social welfare beneficiaries increased from 2.9 million to over 7.4 million
- 56,000 classrooms built
- school enrolment increased by 1.5 million (to 12 million), with broadly equal enrolment of girls and boys.

"But," Mr. Manuel continued, "we recognize that vulnerability remains deep-rooted, exacerbated by rising unemployment and the long shadows cast by the social dislocation and exclusion of the past."

AIDS and slow growth

Overcoming those "long shadows" has been made harder by the worsening of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The crisis was already looming a decade ago, but it has since reached the scale of a national tragedy. South Africa has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in Africa and the world. As of 2001, one out of every five adults was infected — a total of 4.7 million people, not counting a quarter million HIV-positive children. Some 360,000

South Africans died that year alone, and the number of AIDS orphans rose to 660,000. By 2005, average life expectancy will have fallen to 47 years, from 60 years a decade ago.

In the 2004 budget, some R2.1 bn (US$300 mn) has been allocated for programmes to combat HIV/AIDS, including the provision of anti-retroviral medicines. However, many AIDS activists and other commentators have criticized the government for not acting sooner or more forcefully to tackle the problem.

Overall, economic growth has been slower than expected. In the mid-1990s, the government projected that the gross domestic product (GDP) should grow by an annual average of 3.8 per cent in order to achieve the ambitious social and economic objectives. But Mr. Manuel reported in February that the actual average over the past decade has been just 2.8 per cent.

The finance minister noted that South Africa's economy is strongly influenced by the global economy, which is "characterized by extraordinarily uneven growth." In particular, the economies of Western Europe — South Africa's major trading partners — are still growing at less than 1 per cent annually.

Nor has the domestic private sector responded as energetically as anticipated. Although private South African investment has grown over the past decade, it remains at a low level of about 16 per cent of GDP. This compares with nearly 30 per cent in the mid-1970s.

Students at a formerly all-white school: The ANC government has pursued a course of national reconciliation.

Photo: Corbis

Unemployment and poverty

Slow growth and limited investment have in turn contributed to growing joblessness. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the country's largest labour federation, estimates that about 330,000 jobs had been lost in the private sector by 1999, mainly because of factory closures and retrenchments. On top of this, COSATU reported, the government's policy of privatizing some of its largest public-sector enterprises brought cuts of an additional 170,000 jobs.

With tens of thousands of new job seekers entering the labour market each year, the official unemployment rate has continued to rise. Between 1996 and 2002, it rose from 33 per cent to 41.8 per cent.

Important gains have been made in overcoming past inequalities in the labour market, in which the wages of white workers were often several times those of black workers, noted *South Africa: Human Development Report 2003*, published earlier this year by the UN Development Programme (UNDP). However, it continued, "employment opportunities remain inadequately low and are, therefore, unable to reverse or even slow the dominant trend of massive unemployment."

Most troubling, the UNDP report found, both poverty and income inequalities have been increasing. Some 21.9 million South Africans — 48.5 per cent of the total population — now fall below the national poverty line.

Citing a household income survey conducted in 2000, the UNDP report noted that the share of African households in the lowest fifth of the income scale grew from 29 per cent to 33 per cent between 1995 and 2000. Meanwhile the share of white households in the top fifth increased from 60 per cent to 66 per cent. In addition, observes UNDP, there also has been "a rising polarization of income within all racial groups," especially among Africans and those designated as Coloureds and Indians.

Recognizing the dangers that such gaps might some day pose for South Africa's democracy, the government has begun to address them. The 2004 budget includes significant new allocations for public works programmes, skills development, job training, and industrial-capital formation.

Public Works Minister Stella Sigcau reported in late May that the government's R15 bn public works programme will aim to build essential infrastructure and in the process create a million new jobs. The government's long-term goal is to increase overall growth and investment levels, so as to halve the unemployment rate by 2014. In addition, the government is pledging to increase the pace of land allocations to poor rural Africans and to move more carefully in privatizing state enterprises.

COSATU General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi welcomed this "recent shift" in the government's broad economic policy and cited it as a factor in the labour federation's support for the ANC in the April general election.

"None of the great social problems we have to solve is capable of resolution outside the context of the creation of jobs and the alleviation and eradication of poverty," said President Mbeki. ■

UN mediates polio deadlock in Nigeria

New infections threaten global eradication drive

By **Michael Fleshman**

A long and damaging dispute between state and federal authorities in Nigeria over the safety of UN-supplied polio vaccines may be nearing an end. The progress follows the personal intervention of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his Special Adviser on Africa, Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) calls the spread of new infections a "stark warning" of the danger of not resuming immunizations.

UNICEF/ Jody Mac Gillivray

In the past, polio was a major crippler of children in Africa, but it is now nearing eradication.

The controversy began in July 2003, after some Islamic religious leaders charged that vaccines supplied by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) had been deliberately contaminated with sterilization chemicals as part of the US war on terrorism. In response, four state governments in predominantly Muslim northern Nigeria halted a vital immunization campaign until their safety concerns were met. Now all but one state has agreed to resume vaccinations, and local authorities in the final holdout, Kano, have indicated they will soon follow suit.

Despite efforts by both Nigerian federal government and UN health officials to persuade local authorities to resume vaccinating children against the incurable and crippling disease, state authorities maintained that the vaccines were impure and unsafe. Efforts to allay those concerns by laboratory testing failed to resolve the problem. Federal Nigerian government and independent testers announced last year that no contaminants had been found, but tests by the Kano state government were said to confirm the presence of oestrogen and other foreign substances. With the scientists at odds and relations between the Muslim north and the federal government already strained by communal Christian-Muslim violence and the adoption of Islamic Sharia law by most northern states, the dispute ground into political standstill — with disastrous results.

Northern Nigeria is one of only six remaining pockets of naturally occurring polio on earth, together with India, Pakistan, Niger, Afghanistan and Egypt. But because Nigeria's immunization programme was interrupted, the strain unique to the region has spread, reinfecting southern Nigeria and at least 10 other African countries — Ghana, Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Central African Republic, Cameroon, Sudan and distant Botswana, over 4,000 kilometres away.

The outbreak is expected to cost $100 mn for new vaccination drives to contain the disease in these otherwise polio-free areas. Even worse, it is endangering a 16-year, $3 bn international effort to completely eradicate the disease — an unprecedented international effort that the WHO describes as the world's "best and perhaps last" chance to eliminate polio.

The Secretary-General intervenes

It was against this backdrop that the principal stakeholders in the global eradication campaign, the US government, WHO, UNICEF and the charitable organization Rotary International, approached Mr. Annan for assistance in ending the crisis. Rarely do senior UN officials become involved in relations between the national and state governments of member countries. Yet during his tenure Mr. Annan has gone out of his way to associate both himself and the office of the Secretary-General with urgent global public health issues, including HIV/AIDS and malaria. With the global eradication drive at risk, UN officials say, Mr. Annan readily agreed to help.

That help came in the person of Mr. Gambari, his top Africa troubleshooter — and a former Nigerian foreign minister — who was dispatched to Nigeria in early March to deliver a personal message to the parties and help them resolve the problem. Mr. Annan's message, Mr. Gambari told *Africa Renewal*, was very simple. "First, that eradicating polio from the world is doable and tremendous progress toward that goal has been made. Second, that Nigeria is a source of infection in other, polio-free countries. Third, that resources devoted to the polio issue can best be used for ... other development priorities. And finally, that the Secretary-General and the entire UN system was ready to support Nigeria's polio programme."

The veteran diplomat said that his principal challenge was to untangle scientific questions about the vaccine from political and religious issues. "The Secretary-General emphasized to all that this is a public health issue. This is about the children. . . . Whatever the political differences, [leaders] . . . have to put political considerations aside to ensure that all the children of Nigeria are immunized and the disease does not return to places where it has already been eradicated."

Global polio cases*

	2003	June 2004
Nigeria	355	257
India	225	12
Pakistan	103	14
Niger**	40	18
Afghanistan	8	3
Egypt	1	1

* excludes reinfections from Nigeria, estimated to exceed 400
** includes polio reinfections from Nigeria

Source: UN Africa Renewal from World Health Organization data

High-level contacts

The strategy, he continued, was to mobilize Nigeria's most influential political and religious leaders — particularly northern leaders — behind the conclusions of a government verification commission that inspected vaccine manufacturing facilities in South Africa, India and Indonesia in February. The 23-member panel, representing all the stakeholders in the dispute, declared the vaccines safe for use.

On his first day in Nigeria, therefore, Mr. Gambari met with two former heads of state, General Abdulsalami Abubakar and General Muhammadu Buhari, about the crisis. Over the next week, Mr. Gambari met or spoke with five of the country's six living former heads of state and succeeded in winning their support for the commission's report and the resumption of immunization activities. He also met with President Olusegun Obasanjo, traditional and religious leaders, and senior government health officials.

Such political access by the under-secretary-general was made possible by his long service to successive Nigerian governments, including a decade-long stint as Nigerian ambassador to the UN during the 1990s. Of those six former heads of state, he noted, "I actually served with five, including as foreign minister under [General] Buhari. In Nigeria I am not seen as a partisan politician."

Mr. Gambari also used his ties to Nigeria's influential traditional rulers in his mission. When he sought to enlist the support of two key Islamic traditional leaders, the sultan of Sokoto and the emir of Kano, he said, "I asked my brother, the emir of Illorin, to contact them to prepare the ground, and he did." When President Obasanjo launched the immunization drive in Zamfara state in late March, he was joined by the sultan of Sokoto and other prominent northern leaders.

Mr. Gambari also sought to improve communications between federal and state officials. "When I went to Kano I took federal government officials. I encouraged the [national] ministry of health to be as inclusive as possible on the [verification] committee final report, to remove the religious and political aspects and build bridges between the federal and state governments."

The final hurdle

As of late June, Kano officials indicated that they will permit immunizations to resume. Part of the difficulty in the past, Mr. Gambari observed, was that tests in South Africa did discover minute traces of oestrogen in some vaccine samples, a finding that Kano state government officials viewed as vindication for their caution. In fact, say WHO experts, the impurities were natural, found in the water used during manufacturing and at concentrations far lower than in birth control drugs. "Kano [was] the only state resisting immunizations because they were not satisfied that their views and people had been sufficiently involved in the verification exercise," he said.

To overcome that last obstacle, Mr. Gambari explained, the UN proposed a compromise: "We asked the governor of Kano if there was a country we could import the vaccine from that he would be comfortable with. He said Indonesia. We've encouraged [UNICEF] to ensure that enough vaccine is imported from Indonesia to cover the immunization needs of Kano. . . . All that remains is for the state and federal governments to sit down and work out the process."

Since then, Nigerian Health Minister Eyitayo Lambo has announced that the state and federal governments have resolved all remaining issues and that immunizations in Kano will proceed with vaccines from Indonesia. An early start is vital. To reach all of Kano's children after the long halt in immunizations, local officials will have to blanket the state with no fewer than six immunization campaigns before the end of the year. Should that happen, WHO officials report, a massive, coordinated regional campaign to contain the Nigerian outbreak would follow, involving the re-immunization of 74 million children in the rest of Nigeria and 21 other countries in West and Central Africa early in 2005.

The US war on terrorism and the deaths of 11 children who participated in a 1996 drug test in Kano by the US pharmaceutical company Pfizer have contributed to public suspicion of the polio vaccine. The war is widely interpreted as an attack on Islam by residents of the area, and international pressure on the state to resume polio immunizations is perceived as coming most aggressively from the US.

But in the end, Mr. Gambari noted, it comes down to doing what is right for the children and good for Africa. "We told the leaders that this [crisis] is in no way in their interest. Nigeria is a leader in NEPAD [the continental development blueprint], it is a leader in trying to bring peace and stability and development to West Africa." And until Kano completes its vaccination programme, he concluded, "the situation is still serious. As long as all Nigerian children are not immunized, all the gains that have been made can still unravel." ■

Zambian businesses grapple with AIDS

Workplace programmes to protect productive capacity

By **Reginald Ntomba**
Lusaka

Reality is dawning on companies in Zambia: Unless they initiate effective policies to combat HIV/AIDS, they risk seeing their workforces wiped out. "The devastating effect of HIV/AIDS on the corporation's human resources is a great concern," says Ms. Chileshe Kapwepwe, managing director of the National Airports Corporation Limited (NACL), a public enterprise overseeing Zambia's airports. An increasing number of employees are dying, she notes, including the company's most "skilled, experienced and productive." And as a result, the NACL has joined a growing number of Zambian companies that have adopted policies and programmes to respond to the disease's economic and social impact.

More and more Zambian companies are taking action against AIDS within their workforces.

In a country where one out of every five people in the sexually active and productive age group of 15-49 is HIV-positive, it is not just homes, churches, governments and other institutions that are losing members to HIV/AIDS. The corporate world is also counting its losses. The rising number of employee deaths has serious economic repercussions, reflected in lost labour time, compensation for sick and dying workers and their survivors, and higher training costs for the many new workers who must be hired.

Protecting investments

Since the epidemic tends to claim the most skilled and productive sections of the population, it seriously impedes the Zambian economy's broader efforts to build up its human capital base and increase overall productivity. Company chief executives are aware that they not only have to contend with the loss of their own human resources, but also with the danger HIV/AIDS poses to investment and growth more generally.

High death rates associated with the disease may send negative signals to shareholders, making them wary of investing in such companies, fears Mr. Albert Wood, chairperson of the board of the Zambia State Insurance Corporation. "There is therefore need to forestall this impending threat to investment and economic growth," he says. As a result, his corporation has put in place an HIV/AIDS policy that includes the provision of male and female condoms at "strategic" locations on the company's premises. Like many similar schemes at other firms, this policy assures confidentiality to employees, since only doctors and staff administering antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) are authorized to know an employee's HIV status.

The Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation (ZESCO), the monopoly power company, fears that its position as the sole provider of hydroelectric power would be threatened if the pandemic claims much of its staff. To forestall that, the firm has introduced a programme that includes providing ARVs to infected employees and their spouses, with the corporation contributing 75 per cent of the cost and the workers shouldering the remaining 25 per cent.

"Management sat down and looked at how we were losing the experienced human resource," said a ZESCO spokeswoman, Ms. Angela Cifire. To those concerned about the costs of the programme, she argued, "What we should be looking at is not the cost [of the policy], but what we will gain."

To consolidate and coordinate such efforts in the workplace, private companies have formed the Zambia Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS (ZBCA). Its formation was inspired by a UN-sponsored trip to the Thailand Business Coalition by a group of Zambian business executives in 2000. The ZBCA's goals include advocating business action on HIV/AIDS, helping alleviate the impact of the disease on company employees, strengthening and supporting responses aimed at prevention and control of HIV infection and linking companies to technical and community services.

Under the patronage of former President Kenneth Kaunda, now an active campaigner against AIDS, the coalition involves more than 40 companies (many more firms, including small and medium enterprises, also have some form of HIV/AIDS programme). The ZBCA has trained peer educators in affiliated companies, who serve as contact persons on matters of prevention, treatment and ARVs.

Zambia's trade unions, which draw their strength from the workers, support the company initiatives. Their representatives sit on the joint management-employee committees set up to oversee the treatment programmes. "If the workers are not in good health as a result of HIV/AIDS," says Zambian Congress of Trade Unions President Leonard Hikaumba, "employers may be compelled to lay them off on account of their being unproductive."

Combating discrimination

The stigma associated with HIV/AIDS in Zambian society remains a major obstacle. Without addressing the problem of stigma, says ZBCA Executive Director Chileya Nkandu, simply introducing ARV programmes and other measures will leave the problem only "half solved."

To insure that infected employees agree to join such efforts, the policies that companies have put in place so far all pledge to respect workers' privacy and to avoid discrimination on the basis of their HIV status. The National Airports Corporation Limited, for example, provides ARV medicines to infected employees and their spouses. But it affirms that no employee will be subjected to mandatory testing upon hiring. While the company encourages all employees to undergo voluntary counseling and testing, it promises not to discriminate on account of HIV status when considering job promotion, training, transfer or employment benefits.

The government also is aware that discrimination can be detrimental to combating HIV/AIDS. "It is a well known fact that stigma and discrimination, if not properly addressed, can undermine our efforts of conquering HIV/AIDS," says Zambian Vice-President Nevers Mumba. "This is because stigma, silence and discrimination, as well as lack of confidentiality, can undermine HIV prevention, care and treatment."

There is now no specific legislation to outlaw discrimination on the basis of one's HIV status, but such discrimination can be sanctioned as an abuse of human rights, including the right to employment, under Zambian law. The government has pledged to enforce anti-discrimination regulations by 2005. In addition, some HIV/AIDS campaigners are lobbying for a law specifically outlawing discrimination on the basis of HIV status.

The World Health Organization (WHO) agrees on the importance of safeguarding rights in order to make anti-AIDS programmes effective. "Treatment must be based on human rights," says the WHO country representative, Dr. Stella Anyangwe.

Multisectoral response

The government supports the initiatives of the business community, and has instituted policies to combat HIV/AIDS among its own employees. All government ministries now have programmes and policies in place. "HIV/AIDS programmes are expensive," notes Health Minister Brian Chituwo, "but only on the surface. The returns are much higher." In addition to the provision of ARVs by the Ministry of Health, each key ministry has a budgetary allocation for HIV/AIDS awareness programmes for its staff.

By December 2003, US$4.5 mn had been released towards HIV/AIDS programmes, according to Finance and National Planning Minister Ng'andu Magande. Under the government's Poverty Reduction Programme, a further $6 mn was released last year specifically for purchases of drugs, including ARVs.

According to the latest survey conducted by the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, Zambia's HIV prevalence rate was 18 per cent for adult females and 16 per cent for males in 2001/02. There are about 800,000 AIDS orphans in the country, and HIV-related infections take up half the country's hospital beds.

"A crosscutting problem needs a crosscutting solution," says Ms. Margaret Mwanakatwe, chairperson of the National AIDS Council, a government body that plans HIV/AIDS activities countrywide. In the absence of a cure, these efforts rely on prevention and treatment.

So far, only 10,000 Zambians are receiving ARVs, but the authorities hope to increase this number to 100,000, in line with the WHO's 3 by 5 campaign to put 3 million people worldwide on ARVs by 2005. To help increase the number in Zambia, the government has this year requested $600 mn from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

If the funds are approved, non-governmental organizations with viable initiatives will likely receive a significant portion, as they have so far been very active in combating the scourge, in partnership with the government. In this context, company workplace programmes may provide useful guidelines for efforts to care for and prolong the lives of other Zambians living with HIV/AIDS. ■

African businesses lead world in HIV awareness

A survey of over 7,700 business executives worldwide about the impact of HIV/AIDS on their companies has found that more African private sector leaders are aware of the danger than their counterparts anywhere else. The study, conducted by the Global Health Initiative (GHI) of the Swiss-based World Economic Forum, found that 89 per cent of the 1,620 African companies surveyed, including 59 Zambian firms, were "seriously" concerned about the effect of AIDS. Fully 60 per cent of those expected "significant" problems in the future, and almost half reported they have already experienced reduced productivity and increased recruiting and training costs as skilled workers get sick and die.

"African business is leading the world in its awareness of the HIV problem and its impact on the workforce," noted GHI Director Kate Taylor at a 2 June Africa Economic Summit in Maputo, Mozambique. Although only 12 per cent of African firms have adopted formal workplace policies to combat the disease, she noted, that was double the global average. Where African companies do have education, prevention and treatment programmes in place, the study found, they are among the most effective in the world — often reaching beyond the workforce to employees' families and communities. "If African business could share its experience and action with business leaders in other, less progressed countries in the developing and developed world," she continued, "it would be a significant step forward."

Human rights move up on Africa's agenda

New African court to promote rule of law, end impunity for rights violators

By **Michael Fleshman**

For decades, the protection of basic human rights in Africa seemed to be championed mainly — if not exclusively — by a handful of courageous and beleaguered civil society activists. But in recent years, as democracy has spread across the continent, the vital importance of human rights for Africa's long-term security and development has been gaining recognition. More and more African national and intergovernmental institutions are now taking up rights issues.

Earlier this year, Africa took an important step in advancing human rights when the African Union (AU) officially established the African Court on Human and People's Rights. The court adds an enforcement arm to existing human rights institutions on a continent known more for the impunity of those who govern than the strict defence of the rights and liberties of citizens.

The ratification of the protocol to establish the court was welcomed by acting UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Bertrand Ramcharan as "another major advance towards the international rule of law and the fight against impunity for gross violations of human rights." The court will strengthen the work of the African Commission for Human and People's Rights, established in 1987 to promote the continent's principal human rights manifesto, the African Charter for Human and People's Rights (see box, page 12).

Challenging 'culture of impunity'

The court's inauguration is but the latest indication that many African governments, acting nationally and also collectively through the AU, are becoming more serious about strengthening human rights protections and ending what many observers describe as a "culture of impunity" for violators. Even the toughest critics of African governments — African human rights activists — agree.

The wave of democratization that swept Africa in the 1990s, the emergence of a vigorous civil society and greater donor pressure combined to impel important changes in official thinking on human rights.

"The coming into force of the protocol of the African court . . . brings forth greater possibilities of consolidating human rights on the continent," noted Mr. Halidou Ouedraogo, head of the Union Interafricaine des Droits de l'Homme (UIDH), a network of non-governmental human rights organizations in 50 African countries. Speaking from his home in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, the veteran political leader and rights advocate told *Africa Renewal* that "there is a desire to break with the past," when continental politics was dominated by autocratic one-party states and when human rights were generally viewed as domestic matters by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the AU's predecessor.

The main judicial issue in Africa today, he said, "lies between the question of an independent judicial system and the question of impunity." Many African judges are unwilling or unable to rule against their governments, he noted, because they are dependent on the ruling parties for their positions, lack the authority to enforce their rulings or, in some cases, may face arrest or assault for challenging government actions.

"With the [African] court we can put pressure on states to lessen their hold on the courts, which they use to massively violate human rights throughout the region. The creation of the AU was done with input from civil society," he asserted, and as a result "serious violations can be brought before the African Court and [governments] will no longer have a choice in the matter."

AFP / Getty Images, Simon Maina

An April 2004 demonstration in Nairobi organized by the Kenya Human Rights Commission

New thinking

Africa's human rights record has generally paralleled its political history. The denial of human and civil rights by the colonial powers was an important weapon in the hands of the anti-colonial movements of the 1950s and 1960s — mobilizing domestic and international opinion in favour of African self-determination.

Then, as the Cold War increasingly took hold in Africa, many independence-era governments were replaced

by authoritarian, often military regimes. Human rights abuses became more common. Freed from any effective accountability at the ballot box, and with economic and military aid influenced more by superpower allegiances than good governance, some African governments felt at liberty to violate their citizens' rights. The studied silence of other African leaders to the abuses of their peers, justified under the OAU doctrine of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states, led critics to deride the body as a "dictators club."

Despite progress over the past decade, many Africans are still unjustly imprisoned or denied basic rights in other ways.

That pattern began to shift in the 1990s. The wave of democratization that swept much of Africa, the end of white-minority rule in Southern Africa, the emergence of a vigorous and independent civil society and greater pressure by donors combined to impel important changes in official thinking on human rights, say African and international human rights activists. Many African governments, they argue, now understand that they must be seen to be responsive to human rights concerns if they are to retain their domestic legitimacy and their overseas development partnerships.

New institutions like the African Peer Review Mechanism of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the AU's Peace and Security Council (see page 24), alongside the African Court, reflect this new thinking.

'Historic achievement'

Although the court, like the commission, takes its authority from the African Charter, it differs from that body in important ways. In contrast to the commission, whose role is largely advisory and educational, the court's decisions are considered binding, at least on the protocol's signatory governments. The court adds an enforcement mechanism to the charter and other human rights treaties for the first time. It is mandated to receive cases from the commission, African governments — including governments acting on behalf of individual citizens — and African intergovernmental agencies.

The court's founding protocol also establishes a limited right for individuals and non-governmental human rights organizations to bring cases before it.

"I congratulate all of Africa and the African Union on this historic achievement," Mr. Ramcharan noted in January, "and strongly urge speedy ratification of the protocol by all African states." The court's 11 judges will be elected at the upcoming AU summit in July.

The Ghanaian representative on the African Commission, Prof. Emmanuel Dankwa, also underscored the court's status as an AU institution in welcoming its ratification. "A bill of rights without a court is incomplete," he told *Africa Renewal* in March. Where governments could disregard commission findings without penalty, he observed, the rulings of the African Court can be referred to the AU Council of Ministers for enforcement. "The commission therefore sees the court as a complement that will definitely help in the area of human rights in Africa."

Establishment of the African Court was also hailed by Amnesty International as "an extremely positive step for the defence of human rights." The emergence of an independent, effective and adequately financed court, the organization noted, could finally bring an end to official impunity and "stimulate positive changes throughout Africa" by strengthening domestic judicial systems and enforcement of human rights instruments in national courts.

How effective?

Amnesty International and other human rights groups have, however, expressed reservations about some aspects of the court's mandate and jurisdiction. They also question the ability of the court to insulate judges from political pressure.

Mr. Peter Takirambudde, the head of the Human Rights Watch Africa division in New York, told *Africa Renewal* that the "sharp limitations" placed on access to the court by private citizens and non-governmental organizations could greatly limit its effectiveness. Not only must governments individually grant the court jurisdiction over private cases, he noted, but "it has to be established that the complainant has exhausted all local remedies, which unfortunately often cannot be done."

Individuals must also rely solely on personal knowledge when presenting evidence to the court, he said, and are specifically prohibited from using information from the media and other public sources. "This is a severe limitation," he asserted.

Past experience, he noted, argues against relying on governments to bring individuals' cases before the court. "If you go by the record of the African Commission, there is not a single instance of a case brought by one state against another. It has never happened, and it is unlikely to occur. It is not now part of the political culture of Africa."

Changing that culture is one of the challenges facing the African court, Mr. Takirambudde continued, and will require the support of both governmental and non-governmental human rights advocates. "Without civil society, the court will become just another state institution that cannot meet its mandate to protect and advance human rights."

Despite such reservations, Mr. Takirambudde applauded the court's launch as "a step in the right direction" and evidence that African governments are taking human rights more seriously. "The launch of the African Union and adoption of the NEPAD peer review

mechanism — a revolutionary concept — shows a willingness to take human rights protections to a higher level. It may never be fully implemented, but at least they have made the commitment."

Mr. Ouédraogo expressed confidence that many of the court's perceived shortcomings could be addressed over time and noted that the UIDH has already opened a dialogue with African governments and AU leaders about ways to strengthen the court. "We have worked with the African Commission to ensure that individuals and non-governmental entities have access there," he said, adding that it will be vital to achieve similar access to the African Court.

The UIDH is lobbying more governments to ratify the protocol, he explained. "Every country must make a public declaration that NGOs, civil society and ordinary people can take the country to court in cases of serious human rights violations." The UIDH will also conduct a campaign to explain the workings of the AU and the court — sensitizing civil society and government officials to the importance of human rights in good governance, development and conflict resolution.

"Every country must make a public declaration that NGOs, civil society and ordinary people can take the country to court in cases of serious human rights violations."

— Mr. Halidou Ouédraogo
head of the Union Interafricaine des Droits de l'Homme

Mixed record of national commissions

Since Africa's wave of democratization began in the early 1990s, there has been a dramatic increase in governmental human rights institutions — from just one national agency in 1989 to 24 a decade later.

The trend towards the creation of state human rights bodies has been strongly encouraged by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. In 1993, the agency developed a set of guidelines for official human rights commissions, known as the Paris Principles, and maintains a department at its Geneva headquarters to provide technical assistance and support.

In the view of many African and international human rights group, including the UIDH and Human Rights Watch, the establishment of official human rights bodies are welcome evidence that African governments feel pressure from their own civil societies, donors and other development partners to institutionalize the protection of human rights. But the record so far, they add, is very mixed.

In a 2001 study of government human rights commissions entitled *Protectors or Pretenders?*, Human Rights Watch noted that some commissions operate with a broad mandate and are effectively insulated from undue government control. In other cases, however, the study argues that national commissions are intended solely to deflect international criticism of abuses and to mollify donors, who sometimes make their aid conditional on improvements. In many cases, official control of budgets and appointments lead commissioners to avoid politically sensitive issues and focus on important but less controversial aspects of human rights advocacy, such as public education.

"It would be a mistake to equate the creation of a national human rights commission, in and of itself, with greater respect for human rights," the report warns. "Yet the activities of the more promising commissions are proof that these state bodies have the potential to contribute positively to strengthening the human rights culture."

Uganda: defending democratization

The Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) has emerged as one of the strongest and most effective official human rights bodies on the continent. Entrenched in the 1995 constitution after decades of brutal abuses by previous governments, the UHRC's independence and statutory authority — and its willingness to challenge government actions — has been credited for significantly improving the country's human rights record.

Unlike many of its counterparts elsewhere in Africa, the UHRC has quasi-

Africa's own human rights declaration

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights was adopted by the African Union's predecessor, the Organization of African Unity, in 1981, as the continent's primary human rights instrument. It incorporates the same individual rights enshrined in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including equal protection before the law, freedom of speech, religion and assembly, the right to work, own property and have a minimum standard of living and access to health and education and freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention, degrading treatment and torture. With individual rights come individual duties, including the obligation to strengthen the family, to serve the state and to work.

The Charter also establishes a group of "peoples'" or communal rights and obligations, such as a right to national self-determination, that are absent from the 1948 Universal Declaration. Those rights, and such provisions as the obligation of states to "eliminate all forms of foreign economic exploitation" and the right of peoples to pan-African solidarity in the anti-colonial struggle, emerged from Africa's particular historical experience and what the Charter's preamble describes as "the values of African civilization." These rights and duties include:

- The right of equality with other peoples and to be free of domination
- The right to international peace and security
- The right of oppressed peoples to free themselves by "any means recognized by the international community"
- The right to control national wealth and resources "in the exclusive interest of the people"
- The right to economic, social and cultural development
- The duty to promote and strengthen national unity and the state
- The duty to preserve "positive African cultural values"
- The duty to contribute to the achievement of African unity

judicial status, with the authority to:

- subpoena any person or document
- compel testimony
- order the release of detainees
- order financial restitution or other remedies for victims of human rights violations.

Decisions of the commission can be appealed, but only to the supreme legal authority, the Ugandan High Court — a fact that gives the UHRC unusual influence within the national legal system. The commission's ruling in a recent case demonstrates its reach and effectiveness.

Mr. Kabasaala Stephen, a Kampala produce merchant, alleged that in 1999 he had been shot and illegally detained without charge for 109 days by three members of Uganda's military intelligence force. In a detailed 29-page decision issued on 3 March 2004, UHRC Commissioner Fauzat Marriam Wangadya found that the security men had improperly detained and injured Mr. Stephen, in violation of numerous Ugandan laws and international treaties, including the African Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She ordered the government to pay Mr. Stephen 29 mn Ugandan shillings (US$15,000) in compensation and penalties — an amount Ms. Wangadya deemed "sufficient" to make good the injuries and deter the security forces from further abuses.

By subjecting even national security agencies to UHRC scrutiny and making its decisions public, the Ugandan government has made itself accountable for its human rights record.

The commission also plays an important role in education and advocacy, teaching citizens about their human and civil rights as well as their civic duties and obligations. That role will increase as Uganda begins a transition to multiparty democracy, noted UHRC Chairperson Margaret Sekaggya. "It is important that people be empowered to develop the competence and motivation to engage in public problem solving," Mrs. Sekaggya observed at a conference on democratization in November 2003. Civic education cultivates "a sense of personal responsibility for the destiny of society." An informed, engaged and politically aware citizenry, she concluded, was the best guarantor of human rights.

'Proactive' in Namibia

Awareness raising is a central activity of Namibia's non-governmental Legal Assistance Centre, that country's principal human rights organization. Until Namibia's independence in 1990, the LAC represented thousands of victims of apartheid South Africa's occupation army, including members of the Namibian liberation movement.

After independence, LAC Director Clement Daniels told *Africa Renewal*, "We did some soul-searching . . . regarding the role of an independent human rights organization in a post-apartheid society.... The consensus was that . . . we shift focus from reactive litigation to a proactive human rights awareness campaign, as well as lobbying and advocacy for legislative reform in the areas of gender equality, social justice and racial discrimination."

Although Namibia does not have a formal human rights commission, the independence constitution did establish an ombudsman's office, which is authorized to investigate human rights complaints. In practice, Mr. Daniels said, the office deals largely with cases of corruption and illegality in the public sector — leaving a gap in human rights advocacy the LAC and other civil society groups are struggling to fill.

Today, he noted, "the basic challenge that Namibians face is ignorance about their human and legal rights and the means to effectively enforce and protect [against] the violation of these rights. The justice system remains inaccessible to the vast majority due to financial constraints." Economic and social issues, such as access to education and health care, land reform, racial discrimination, violence against women and children, police brutality and the stigmatization of homosexuals and people living with HIV/AIDS, he said, now dominate the centre's caseload.

In addition to human and constitutional rights awareness programmes, the LAC has trained 280 community-based volunteers in basic law and helped launch a national paralegal association to expand public access to the courts. Mr. Daniels praised the Namibian judiciary for its independence and professionalism and predicted that, because of them, the African Court will not have an immediate impact on the country. But "for Africa in general, it is a great move." In countries with weak judiciaries, he pointed out, "complainants might find the African Court as the only option." ■

Police facing demonstrators in Zimbabwe: Civil society activists are becoming more vocal across Africa.

UN seeking to avert a 'new Rwanda'

Human rights, conflict prevention key to barring future genocides, says Annan

By **Ernest Harsch**

Could the world witness another mass slaughter like the one that claimed hundreds of thousands of Rwandans a decade ago? As commemorative meetings were held across the globe on 7 April to mark the tenth anniversary of that genocide, many speeches included the refrain "never again." But beyond such affirmations, there was little confidence that the world is yet able to thwart a similar horror.

AFP/Getty Images/James Akena

Demonstrators in northern Uganda demand protection after rebels massacred 200 villagers.

"Confronted by a new Rwanda today, could and would governments respond effectively, in good time?" UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan asked in a message read on his behalf at the official ceremony in Kigali, Rwanda. "We can by no means be certain this would happen."

Many commentators pointed towards the current killings in the Darfur region of western Sudan as an immediate challenge (see page 17). In an address before the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva on the day of the Rwanda anniversary, Mr. Annan specifically cited reports of serious human rights abuses and the mounting humanitarian crisis in Darfur, affirming that "the international community cannot stand idle."

As he has done repeatedly since becoming Secretary-General, Mr. Annan acknowledged in that speech that the UN Secretariat, the Security Council, national governments and the international media had all failed to pay enough attention to the gathering signs of disaster in Rwanda. And as the signs mounted, they failed to act.

As a result, some 800,000 women, children and men were killed in Rwanda within the space of just 100 days. Most victims belonged to the minority Tutsi ethnic group, but many from the Hutu majority who opposed the government's repressive policies also were killed. The genocide ended only when the rebel Rwanda Patriotic Front seized power in Kigali.

Since the dead cannot be brought back to life, Mr. Annan said in his Geneva address, "the only fitting memorial" the UN can offer those who perished in 1994 is a plan of action to prevent future genocides. The plan involves five broad areas of activity:

- *Preventing armed conflict:* Since genocide almost always occurs during war, governments and the international community must address the underlying causes of conflict. These include hatred, racism, the dehumanization of minorities, tyranny, poverty, inequality, youth unemployment and competition for scarce resources.
- *Protecting civilians in armed conflict:* When conflicts do erupt, one of the highest priorities should be protecting civilians. All combatants, state and non-state alike, must be reminded of their responsibility under international law to protect civilians. Peacekeeping missions must have the capacity to act when civilians are endangered.
- *Ending impunity:* National and international courts must be strengthened to make certain that perpetrators of genocide or other large-scale acts of violence do not escape prosecution.
- *Ensuring early, clear warning:* The signs of impending or potential genocide must be quickly recognized and disseminated.
- *Taking swift and decisive action:* National governments, the Security Council and other bodies must have the political will to move quickly and effectively to block the development of genocide or to halt it if it has begun.

Human rights to the fore

One of the reasons for the failure to act in Rwanda, Mr. Annan noted, was that "beforehand we did not face the fact that genocide was a real possibility. And once it started, for too long we could not bring ourselves to recognize it, or call it by its name."

At a memorial conference held in New York on 26 March, UN Special Adviser on Africa and Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari elaborated on this point, drawing on his own experience as Nigerian ambassador in 1994 during the Security Council discussions of Rwanda. "United States officials would not allow the word 'genocide' to be used in public comments and in particular during the deliberations of the Security Council," he observed. The reluctance to use the word, Mr. Gambari felt, stemmed from fear among key Council members that it would increase pressure to act, under the 1948

UN Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide.

While recognizing the reality of genocide is important, Secretary-General Annan said in his Geneva address, he also warned that "we must not be held back by legalistic arguments about whether a particular atrocity meets the definition of genocide or not. By the time we are certain, it may often be too late to act." Therefore, *preventing* genocide requires moving more quickly and seriously to stem large-scale abuses of human rights, especially when directed against ethnic, racial or religious groups.

African countries must strengthen their own national and continental institutions to prevent the slaughter of civilians. "We have to learn to protect each other," Rwandan President Paul Kagame said on the anniversary of the genocide.

Mr. Annan announced the creation of a new post at the UN, a special adviser on the prevention of genocide. The adviser will sound the alarm by reporting through the Secretary-General to the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as to the UN Commission on Human Rights. The adviser's mandate, Mr. Annan stressed, "will refer not only to genocide but also to mass murder and other large-scale human rights violations, such as ethnic cleansing."

Civil society groups also can play a vital role, Mr. Annan added. "Often it is their reports that first draw attention to an impending catastrophe."

The Commission on Human Rights has a special responsibility, he said, because it has an established system of special rapporteurs, independent experts and working groups that can investigate and help publicize major abuses. Several recent reports of the UN high commissioner for human rights have raised particularly sharp warnings about attacks against ethnic and religious groups, most notably in Sudan and Côte d'Ivoire.

From Darfur to Abidjan

The report on Sudan, released in early May, noted the alarming scale of the crisis in the Darfur region, with widespread killing of civilians and burning of villages. The investigators found that an "ethnically-based rebellion has been met with an ethnically-based response." They also asserted: "A disturbing pattern of disregard for basic principles of human rights and humanitarian law is taking place in Darfur by both the armed forces of Sudan and its proxy militia."

That same month, the high commissioner for human rights also released a report of a special commission of inquiry sent to Côte d'Ivoire to investigate the brutal suppression of an anti-government protest on 25 March in Abidjan, the country's largest city. The march had been called by opposition parties to demand that the government fully implement the peace accords signed by all parties to end the civil war that began in September 2002, largely along ethnic and religious lines.

Although the demonstrators were unarmed, they were almost immediately attacked by police, troops and irregular militia forces loyal to President Laurent Gbagbo. That day and the next, these forces fanned through the poor districts of Abidjan inhabited mainly by members of predominantly Muslim northern ethnic groups or immigrants from Burkina Faso, Mali and other neighbouring countries. At least 120 people were killed, and possibly many more, the commission found.

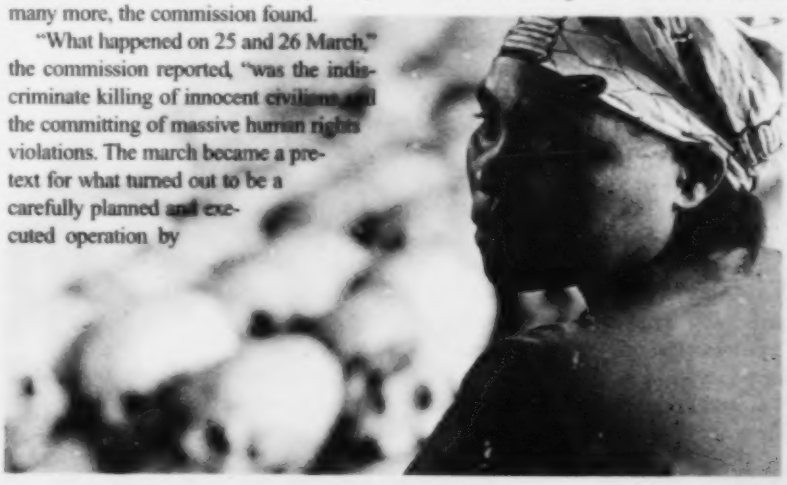
"What happened on 25 and 26 March," the commission reported, "was the indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians and the committing of massive human rights violations. The march became a pretext for what turned out to be a carefully planned and executed operation by the security forces . . . as well as special units and the so-called parallel forces, under the direction and responsibility of the highest authorities of the state."

Pointing to the frequency of serious ethnic tensions and gross human rights violations across the continent, numerous African commentators have highlighted the dangerous potential for large-scale butchery in their own countries. After a Rwanda anniversary prayer meeting in Uganda, Housing Minister Francis Babu told reporters that the tendency of some Ugandan politicians to divide the population "along tribal lines" could lead to "similar massacres like those that took place in Rwanda." An opinion article in the daily *Ghanaian Chronicle*, citing ethnic killings in Ghana's Northern Region, asked in its headline, "Rwanda 10 years later: Could it happen in Ghana?"

Ending impunity

After taking up the report on Côte d'Ivoire, the UN Security Council, through its president, not only condemned the violations of human rights there, but also called for "an end to impunity" by making sure that those responsible "be held accountable." The Council welcomed the commission's decision to investigate all human rights violations in Côte d'Ivoire since the start of the war.

In his Geneva speech, Mr. Annan highlighted the special role of accountability: "We have little hope of preventing genocide, or reassuring those who live in fear of



A Rwandan sits vigil at a memorial site to the 1994 genocide.

its recurrence, if people who have committed this most heinous of crimes are left at large, and not held to account. It is therefore vital that we build and maintain robust judicial systems, both national and international — so that, over time, people will see there is no impunity for such crimes."

The creation of the International Criminal Tribunal in Rwanda (ICTR) was one of the first examples of such action by the international community in Africa. It was followed by the establishment of the Special Court in Sierra Leone, which on 3 June began its first trials of individuals accused of crimes against humanity during that country's civil war.

AFP / Getty Images / Issouf Sanogo

Rwandan villagers attend a community gacaca court trying accused perpetrators of the genocide. Ending impunity is essential.

The prosecutors of the ICTR have selected about 200 cases of high-level organizers of the Rwanda genocide for investigation and possible prosecution. Since its first trials began in Arusha, Tanzania, in 1997, and after a number of delays, the ICTR has judged nearly two dozen defendants and a similar number are currently on trial. It hopes to complete all its investigations by the end of this year and to conclude its trials by 2008.

The ICTR was the first court of any kind to hold a former head of government responsible for genocide. It was the first to determine that rape was used as an act of genocide. And it was the first court to find that journalists who incited genocide were themselves guilty of that crime.

The ICTR views its efforts as complementary to those of Rwanda's own courts, including its innovative community-run tribunals known as *gacaca*. Since their first trials in 2002, hundreds of *gacaca* have been established, each headed by judges elected by the local communities in which massacres took place. In less than two years they have tried more than 7,000 individuals.

Where national court systems are unable to do so, the new International Criminal Court (ICC) also can deal with crimes against humanity, Mr. Annan noted. Because the jurisdiction of the ICC only began in July 2002, it has so far been preoccupied primarily with setting up its structures and has not yet heard any cases.

However, in late January 2004, the ICC prosecutor, Mr. Luis Moreno-Ocampo, announced preparations for the court's first investigation — to be conducted in Africa. Specifically, it will examine atrocities committed by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda. The LRA insurgency and the government's military campaigns to suppress it have claimed more than 100,000 lives since the late 1980s and displaced some 1.6 million people. The LRA's combatants have become notorious for their victimization of villagers, rapes and the abduction of some 20,000 children, who are used as porters and child soldiers. In February, Mr. Moreno-Ocampo cited an LRA massacre of more than 200 displaced people at a camp in northern Uganda as further reason to investigate the group's crimes.

Beyond providing some measure of justice for the victims of such atrocities, proponents of the ICC, Rwanda tribunal and similar judicial institutions argue that punishing the perpetrators may serve as a deterrent to others contemplating the organization of massacres.

Political will

Better early warning mechanisms, ending impunity and other measures are all important for impeding the road to genocide. However, Mr. Gambari reminded listeners at the Rwanda memorial conference in New York, "The real key is political will to act promptly and decisively." In Rwanda, that will was absent.

General Roméo Dallaire, who headed the UN's small peacekeeping mission in Rwanda at the time of the genocide, noted at the same conference that the international community had been particularly reluctant to act in Africa. The UN force, he said, was a mission without a budget or a structure, but "meanwhile hundreds of millions of dollars were pouring into Yugoslavia." Were some human beings "more human than others?" he asked.

Since the turn of the decade, there have been signs of greater willingness by the major powers to support new peacekeeping missions in Africa. The UN Security Council currently has seven authorized UN peacekeeping missions on the continent — Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Western Sahara. Another is being planned for southern Sudan.

Some Northern governments also have taken their own initiatives. In 2003, a French-led multinational European force of 1,200 troops was sent to the Ituri region of the Democratic Republic of Congo at a time of widespread massacres between the Lendu and Hema ethnic groups. That intervention, known as Operation Artémis, "almost certainly prevented a genocide in Ituri," argue Mr. Gareth Evans and Mr. Stephen Ellis, the president and Africa director, respectively, of the International Crisis Group, a Brussels-based think-tank.

In September 2003, Operation Artémis formally handed over its peacekeeping authority in Ituri to the UN mission, MONUC. In his Geneva address, Secretary-General Annan cited the mission's work in Ituri as an example of the more robust mandates that now guide peacekeeping operations, authorized not only to defend themselves when under attack, but also to protect civilians under threat of imminent violence. Ituri, he noted, is an area "where ethnic conflicts clearly have the potential to escalate into

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Killings and hunger stalk western Sudan

Armed attacks on villagers set off a major humanitarian crisis

Since late last year, the greater Darfur region of western Sudan has been plunged into one of the worst emergencies in the world today. Many thousands of villagers have been killed as the Sudanese armed forces and a government-backed militia seek to crush local insurgents. Some 2 million people, many of them driven from their homes by the conflict, need "acute assistance," according to UN estimates. Another 130,000 have fled across the border into neighbouring Chad.

Darfur, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland told the UN Security Council in late May, threatens to become "the biggest humanitarian drama of our time." The UN has appealed for $236 mn in emergency relief for Darfur, and a donors' meeting on 3 June received pledges for more than half that amount.

"Scorched-earth tactics are being employed throughout Darfur, including the deliberate destruction of schools, wells, seeds and food supplies. I consider this to be ethnic cleansing."

— Jan Egeland
UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs

Ethnic attacks

While Sudan often has been hit by drought, the origins of this crisis are primarily political. "Scorched-earth tactics are being employed throughout Darfur, including the deliberate destruction of schools, wells, seeds and food supplies," Mr. Egeland said in early April. "I consider this to be ethnic cleansing. I can't find any other word for it because these attacks primarily target the Fur, Zaghawa, Masaalit and certain other communities of black African origin."

Given the urgency of the situation, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan wrote to Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir in mid-May, urging his government to disarm the militia forces and improve access by humanitarian workers. He also asked the president to maintain a humanitarian cease-fire to permit the distribution of food and other assistance and to facilitate the deployment of observers from the African Union.

In its sharpest statement on Darfur so far, the Security Council said on 25 May that it "strongly condemns" any action that threatens a peaceful resolution to the conflict. It also expressed deep concern over reports of large-scale violations of human rights and international law "especially those with an ethnic dimension."

Local disputes

There have been armed clashes in Darfur since the late 1980s, stemming in part from conflicts between livestock herders and settled farmers over access to land. In 2003, these escalated sharply as two rebel movements emerged. The rebels draw their support mainly from Fur and Masaalit farming communities and from Zaghawa pastoralists. They accuse the central government in Khartoum not only of marginalizing Darfur, but also of supporting nomadic Arab pastoralists in their disputes with other groups.

In response, the regular Sudanese armed forces have carried out extensive military operations. In addition, an irregular Arab militia force, known as the Janjaweed, was formed. According to a report issued on 7 May by the UN high commissioner for human rights, many of the attacks against civilians were carried out by mounted Janjaweed fighters, who often rode into villages to kill residents, seize their crops and burn down their homes. Reports of rape have been widespread.

Although the government has maintained that the Janjaweed are an autonomous force, the UN report cited evidence that many militia fighters have been paid and armed by the government. The attacks on villagers, moreover, have included assaults by helicopter gunships and aerial bombardment of homes, markets and shops. The field missions of the UN high commissioner also gathered information that the rebels themselves have carried out rights violations, including kidnapping some children to serve with their forces.

The UN report found "disturbing patterns of massive human rights violations" by both the regular armed forces and the Janjaweed. "It is clear that there is a reign of terror in Darfur." Since the victims have been overwhelmingly from certain ethnic groups — which identify themselves as "black," in distinction from those of Arab background — it also noted that

Refugees from Darfur at a camp in Chad. A total of 2 million people in western Sudan need relief aid.

AFP / Getty Images / Marco Longari

the conflict has "worrying ethnic, if not racial dimensions." Many of the actions of the army and militia "may constitute war crimes and/or crimes against humanity."

Peace in south?

The crisis in Darfur comes at a time when Sudan's other major conflict, in the south, appears to be moving towards a comprehensive settlement. On 26 May the Sudanese government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement signed the final three protocols of a peace agreement. They provide for a power-sharing arrangement and division of oil revenues for an interim period of six and a half years, after which southern Sudanese will decide in a referendum whether they wish to remain part of Sudan or form a separate state.

The agreement promises to end more than two decades of a war that has claimed 1.5 million lives and displaced about 4 million more in southern Sudan. The insurgents have been resisting government efforts to impose Islamic Sharia law on a region where Christianity and indigenous religions predominate.

Although the conflict in Darfur does not have the same religious dimensions as in the south (because almost all participants, on both sides, are Muslims), there still are fears that an escalation could impede the southern peace process.

But if peace takes root in southern Sudan, that could in turn help calm tensions elsewhere in the country. The day the protocols were signed, Secretary-General Annan called on all sides in Darfur "to seize the momentum" created by the southern peace process to reach a political resolution there as well. ■

UN seeking to avert a 'new Rwanda'

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genocide," but today UN peacekeepers "are holding the local militias in check."

'Responsibility to protect'

One effort to generate greater international commitment was a report, "The Responsibility to Protect," which featured prominently at a panel discussion at UN headquarters on the tenth anniversary of the Rwanda genocide. The report was originally issued in 2001 by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, organized by Canada and co-chaired by Mr. Gareth Evans, a former Australian foreign minister. The other co-chair was Mr. Mohamed Sahnoun, a former Algerian diplomat who has served as UN special representative for the conflicts in Somalia, on the Ethiopia-Eritrea border and in Africa's Great Lakes region.

The commission members, Mr. Sahnoun told the panel, agreed that when states are unwilling or unable to protect their people, the international community should heed its "moral duty" to protect endangered civilians. "Intervention for human protection is justified," he said. Such intervention, he added, should emphasize preventive actions first of all, and only move towards coercive measures when prevention has failed.

Speaking on the same panel, Mr. Lloyd Axworthy, former Canadian foreign minister and currently UN special envoy for the Ethiopia-Eritrea border dispute, noted that some developing countries have expressed concern about concepts such as "humanitarian intervention" or the "responsibility to protect." They view them as justifications for advancing Northern interests. The war in Iraq "has added to these anxieties," Mr. Axworthy observed.

Addressing a similar concern, Mr. Sahnoun argued that international intervention to protect civilians should only be authorized by a "universally accepted authority." To move in that direction, he said, the UN Security Council will need to undergo structural reforms, including a broadening of its membership to make it more representative.

African initiative

There is much that Africa itself can do to prevent genocide, many African commentators have insisted. "We Africans must take concrete steps, even while waiting for help," General Henry Kwami Anyidoho, the deputy commander of the UN peacekeeping mission in Rwanda in 1994, said at the New York panel discussion.

In Kigali, at a large ceremony in Amahoro Stadium to commemorate the tenth anniversary, Rwandan President Paul Kagame appealed to African countries to strengthen their own national institutions and work together to prevent similar killings, "so that we don't have to rely on external forces. We have to learn to protect each other, for no one owes us anything."

Addressing a memorial meeting at the African Union (AU) headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, that country's President Girma Wolde-Giorgis pointed to the international community's limited efforts to avert conflicts in Africa as a strong motivation for strengthening the AU's own conflict prevention mechanisms.

Others have emphasized the need for further political reforms within African countries themselves, to avert conflicts that could foster genocide. "If we did not have greedy, corrupt and despotic leaders who choose to cling to power at any cost," argued a columnist for the *Financial Gazette* newspaper in Zimbabwe, "most of the conflicts raging in Africa would not arise in the first place."

Mr. Emmanuel Dongola, a novelist who was forced to flee his native Congo Republic during a civil war in the 1990s, urged reducing the ability of politicians to manipulate ethnic identities. "States must be rebuilt by taking the different ethnic groups into account so that no group feels ostracized," he wrote in the *New York Times* a day before the Rwanda anniversary.

"Transforming the state along these lines will bring security to all citizens," Mr. Dongola continued. "It is this security, more than a museum or commemorative speeches, that will be the greatest homage we can pay to the victims of the Rwanda genocide." ■

Rough road to sustainable development

Water, sanitation and housing among Africa's environment priorities

By **Gumisai Mutume**

More than a decade after the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the world is still scrambling to meet its ambitious targets. An estimated 1.5 billion people remain without safe drinking water and about 2.5 billion have no access to adequate sanitation. Almost 1 billion people, most of them in developing countries, live in slums, a figure expected to double over the next 30 years.

That was the grim picture portrayed at the 12th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), held in New York from April 14-30. The commission was set up to monitor the implementation of the Rio agreements, but delegates also reviewed progress in providing water, sanitation and human settlements, as spelled out at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

Acute water problems

While the global picture is far from encouraging, that of Africa is much worse. On most indicators on the provision of water, sanitation and human settlements, progress remains slowest in the world's poorest region.

Although the Johannesburg summit set a target of reducing by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2015, more than 300 million Africans still lack access to safe drinking water and 14 countries on the continent suffer from water scarcity. Out of 55 countries in the world with domestic water use below 50 litres per person per day (the minimum requirement set by the World Health Organization), 35 are in Africa. Almost half of all Africans suffer from one of six main water-related diseases.

The UN Development Programme reports that the proportion of urban dwellers with access to safe drinking water in Sub-Saharan Africa only declined slightly, from 86 per cent in 1990 to 83 per cent in 2000.

"Water problems in Africa are acute and complex," Nigerian Water Minister Mukhtari Shehu Shagari told the CSD session. Water bodies in Africa are shrinking. The size of Lake Chad, for example, has fallen from 25,000 square kilometers during the 1960s to less than 3,000 square kilometres today, affecting more than 20 million people.

Meanwhile, Africa has seemingly abundant water resources that are not being efficiently utilized. With 17 large rivers and more than 160 major lakes, Africa only uses about 4 per cent of its total annual renewable water resources for agriculture, industry and domestic purposes. The challenge, says Mr. Shagari, is getting water to where it is needed most, affordably and efficiently. Currently, about 50 per cent of urban water is wasted, as is 75 per cent of irrigation water.

More than 300 million Africans lack access to safe water.

Investments needed

At a pan-African conference on water in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in December 2003, African water ministers and development planners identified lack of money and technology as the major hindrances to solving Africa's water and sanitation problems. "The average annual investment between 1990 and 2000 for water supply and sanitation in Africa was $4.6 bn, or 40 per cent of the requirement for meeting basic needs," Mr. K.Y. Amoako, executive secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa told the meeting.

Many countries do not have the money. During the last 20 years African economic growth rates were low, resulting in financial constraints and competition for ever-declining public resources. As a result, budgetary allocations to social services such as health, education, water supply and sanitation suffered. To make matters worse, donor support for the sector has also been declining.

The Addis Ababa meeting produced a framework for water management on the continent, "Africa Water Vision 2025," which calls for more resources to be allocated to the sector. The plan estimates that the continent needs to invest at least $20 bn annually over the next 20 years to attain its goals. Out of this amount, at least $12 bn would have to be spent on basic water supply and sanitation. "Water holds the key to achieving the goals of reducing poverty and hunger by 50 per cent by 2015," says Mr. Shagari, the water minister from Nigeria.

As a first step, the Addis Ababa conference agreed to establish national task forces to prepare country plans detailing annual

service-delivery targets for achieving the water and sanitation goals. The ministers pledged to allocate at least 5 per cent of government budgets to water and sanitation within five years. They also agreed to set up a fund, the African Water Facility, to raise more than $600 mn by 2009 for water and sanitation programmes.

However, while most governments hide behind the excuse of lack of money, the real problem is how the money is being spent, says Mr. Gourisankar Ghosh, executive director of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, an international non-governmental organization. He says that about $5 bn in donor aid goes to water and sanitation each year, while governments in developing countries spend about the same amount. "The problem is that sanitation is a very local, household and individual issue, yet solutions are being implemented from a top-down government approach, without involving people," Mr. Ghosh told *Africa Renewal*. "When this fails, people claim that money is the problem."

Also, he says, many governments deal with the provision of water and sanitation as a single, separate entity rather than part of a broad development agenda encompassing education, women's empowerment, community participation, nurturing efficient markets and building human resources. "Sanitation is a multi-faceted issue. It is not just about building a latrine."

Growing slums

UN Conference on Human Settlements Executive Director Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka expresses similar sentiments about governments and community involvement in the provision of housing. "The poor are not just passive objects," she says. "Most often they are solving their own problems, but governments are failing to recognize their efforts. Instead of harnessing their energy they are discouraging the poor from participating in the improvement of their own living conditions."

There are many well-documented examples of communities taking charge of their housing needs despite little or no government assistance. For example, in South Africa a popular movement known as the South African Homeless Peoples Federation has been encouraging local communities to organize themselves into informal savings groups to build their own houses. Since its establishment in the early 1990s, the federation has seen 14,000 low-cost houses built across South Africa by former slum-dwellers, the majority of them women. The federation is currently supporting similar savings groups in Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Namibia, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In some African urban areas, the problems of providing housing are further complicated by numerous governance issues, such as poor accountability and lack of capacity, that hinder effective urban management. The weakness of central government and municipalities gives rise to a situation "where nobody is taking charge, nobody is providing guidance," Ms. Rosemary Rop, of the Kenyan non-governmental organization Maji Na Ufanisi, told *Africa Renewal*.

To make matters worse, governments do not commit sufficient resources to address the problems of existing slums, further reducing them to wastelands of overcrowding, poverty and social exclusion. "Governments simply label these informal settlements as illegal and do not provide services to them," says Ms. Rop. In Nairobi, 60 per cent of the population lives in slums that occupy only 5 per cent of the city's land. This is the case in most large African cities, where between 40 and 70 per cent of urban dwellers live in slums.

The task ahead appears insurmountable. While world leaders have pledged to improve the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020, the number of people living in informal settlements is expected to double to 2 billion people in the next 30 years.

If Africa is to attain its sustainable development goals, it needs solutions that bring in all sectors, says UN Special Adviser on Africa Ibrahim Gambari. "If there is one lesson that we have learned about development, it is that partnership among the public and private sector and civil society is essential," he says. "Water, sanitation and human settlements lend themselves to many creative forms of partnerships." However, he notes, "communal action cannot and should not substitute for effective public policy. Governments should take the lead in achieving the commitments that they have pledged to undertake." ■

Nairobi, Kenya. Sixty per cent of the city's people live in slum areas.

South Africa sets pace on rural water

Government promises to reach all by 2008

By **Gumisai Mutume**

As South Africa celebrates 10 years of freedom, it also is being hailed by the international community as a model for other developing countries in providing rural water. By the end of this year, 10 million South Africans who were deprived a decade ago will have access to clean water.

"We are really past the international millennium development targets," South Africa's then-Water and Forestry Minister Ronnie Kasrils told *Africa Renewal* in April. "In the year 2008, all our people will have access to clean water." Mr. Kasrils, who has since been appointed intelligence minister, was in New York attending the 12th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

A basic right

In 1994, some 14 million of the country's 40 million people did not have access to safe drinking water and 21 million were without adequate sanitation. To confront those challenges, South Africa wrote into its constitution provisions guaranteeing access to sufficient food and water as a basic right. The government adopted the Reconstruction and Development Programme, a social development policy that emphasized state provision of basic services. One of its goals was to ensure that there was a tap within 200 metres of every household in the rural areas.

South Africa also introduced a policy providing the first 6,000 litres of water per month per family for free. If the family consumes more than that, it is charged a stepped tariff. "That is designed to ensure that the wealthier are able to cross-subsidize the very poor," said Mr. Kasrils.

His government inherited a country with no single national institution responsible for water delivery. New legislation had to be written and municipalities had to be established in many black rural areas that lacked even these basic institutions. Mr. Kasrils conceded that much still has to be done. Some of the newly created municipalities are only beginning to become functional. In rural areas, some 5 million people still have to walk to distant rivers and springs to fetch water.

South Africa's success has a lot to do with political will, but unlike many other developing countries, it also has the resources to implement its programmes. It is sub-Saharan Africa's wealthiest nation with an average per capita income of $2,800, compared to a continental average of $300.

Against privatization

But even for South Africa, the provision of sustainable water services in urban areas remains a major challenge. Government critics insist that cost-recovery programmes have rendered water unaffordable for the urban poor. The non-governmental Anti-Privatization Forum has charged that the new policies have cut off millions of urban South Africans from their water supply.

Nearly 10 million more South Africans have access to clean water than a decade ago.

Mr. Trevor Ngwane, an activist with the Anti-Privatization Forum, says privatization acts against every South African's constitutional right because water is "no longer provided on the basis of need but on the ability to pay. Many poor people in South Africa simply cannot afford to pay for water." In urban areas, the group says, the cost of water is rising and private corporations are installing pre-paid metres that stop delivering water when the payment has been exhausted. The NGO estimates that millions of poor urban dwellers have been cut off, but the government disputes its figures.

Following the adoption of market-led economic policies in 1996, the government reduced grants and subsidies to urban municipalities, forcing some to turn to commercialization as a way of generating revenue. Mr. Kasrils maintains that out of 284 municipalities in the country, only 5 have service and management agreements with private water companies.

South Africa's two major cities, Cape Town and Johannesburg, have the highest number of private water ventures in Southern Africa. Zambia has two projects, while Angola plans to establish two and Tanzania three. "There is no other way to create sustainable service providers, than by ensuring that those who get services pay for these, with appropriate transparent arrangements made for subsidizing the poor when a government deems that necessary," argues Mr. David Grey, senior water adviser at the World Bank. He says that simply charging for what is delivered and collecting bills in a timely manner is a pragmatic starting point for governments in the region, but adds that they need to attract service providers with sound finances. ■

AFRICA AGENDA

6-8 July 2004, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) — Third Ordinary African Union Summit. Contact Desmond T. Orjiako, tel (251-1) 512005, e-mail <OrjiakoDT@africa-union.org>.

8-10 July 2004, Auckland (New Zealand) — International Conference on Sustainability, Engineering and Science. Contact Vickya Adin, tel (64-9) 299-7538, e-mail <vickya@kiwilink.co.nz>, website <www.icser.auckland.ac.nz>.

11-16 July 2004, Bangkok (Thailand) — XV International AIDS Conference. Website <www.ias.se/aids2004>.

18-20 July 2004, Accra (Ghana) — Ghana's Economy at the Half-Century. E-mail <negconf@isser.ug.edu.gh>.

19-23 July 2004, New London, CT (USA) — UNEP Tunza International Children's Conference on the Environment. Contact Barbara Morgan, tel (1-860) 437-0757, e-mail <info@icc04.org>, website <www.icc04.org>.

28-30 July 2004, Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe) — International Conference on Water and Wastewater Management for Developing Countries. Contact Innocent Nhapi, tel (263-4) 303-288, e-mail <inhapi@eng.uz.ac.zw>, website <www.uz.ac.za/engineering/civi>.

1-10 August 2004, Arusha (Tanzania) — Worldwide Symposium on Gender and Forestry. Contact Prof. E. Ardayfio-Schandorf, e-mail <ardayfel@ug.edu.gh>.

5-7 August 2004, Arusha (Tanzania) — Women and ICT: Challenges and Opportunities, to prepare for participation at World Summit on the Information Society in Tunisia in 2005. Contact Hamza Kassongo, tel (255-22) 2136354, fax (255-22) 2138340.

30 August - 1 September 2004, Lausanne (Switzerland) — AIDS Vaccine 2004 International Conference, highlighting the role of developing countries in HIV vaccine research. Website <www.aidsvaccine04.org>.

5-7 September 2004, Kampala (Uganda) — Universities: Taking a Leading Role in ICT-Enabled Human Development. Contact Makerere University, tel (041) 531437, e-mail <helpme@dicts.mak.ac.ug>.

7-9 September 2004, Port Louis (Mauritius) — Sixth Annual African Computing and Telecommunications Summit, on the theme "Developing Africa as an ICT Outsourcing Destination." Contact Sean Moroney, tel (44-1480) 495595, e-mail <sean@aitecafrica.com>.

13-17 September 2004, Barcelona (Spain) — World Urban Forum. Contact UN-Habitat, e-mail <infohabitat@unhabitat.org>, website <www.unhabitat.org/wef>.

16-18 September 2004, Grahamstown (South Africa) — Eighth Highway Africa Conference. Contact Chris Kabwato, tel (27-082) 582-9543, fax (27-046) 622-9591, e-mail <C.Kabwato@ru.ac.za>.

8-10 October 2004, Madison, Wisconsin (USA) — Second Annual Towards an Africa Without Borders Conference. Tel (608) 262-8462, e-mail <mwnguga@wisc.edu> or <jwnagua@wisc.edu>.

11-15 October 2004, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) — African Development Forum, sponsored by the UN Economic Commission for Africa. Contact Mr. Robert Okello, tel (251-1) 443040, fax (251-1) 514416, e-mail <rokello@uneca.org>.

11-22 October 2004, Gaborone (Botswana) — The Politics of HIV/AIDS Healthcare and Funding. Contact NSJ Trust, tel (258-1) 493400, fax (258-1) 490880, e-mail <nsj@nsjtraining.org>.

13-15 October 2004, Capetown (South Africa) — African Development and Poverty Reduction: The Macro-Micro Linkage, conference sponsored by CPRU, TIPS and Cornell University. E-mail <dpruconf@commerce.uct.ac.za>, website <www.commerce.uct.ac.za/dpruconference2004.htm>.

WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE

9-10 June 2004, Windhoek (Namibia) — From Local to Global conference. Tel (061) 264-879, website <www.1verkko.net/conference/index.phtml>.

28-30 June, Tunis (Tunisia) — International African Ministerial Council on Water. E-mail <mochebelrt@nepad.org>, website <www.nepad.org>.

AFRICA BOOKS

Designing West Africa: Prelude to a 21st Century Calamity by Peter Schwab (Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, UK, 2004; 192 pp; $24.95)

La democratie-monde: Pour une autre gouvernance globale by Pascal Lamy (Seuil, Ballainvilliers, France, 2004; 90 pp; €10.50)

L'Afrique du Sud dix ans après: Transition accomplie?, eds. Philippe Guillaume, Nicolas Pejout and Aurélia wa Kabwe-Segatti (Karthala, Paris, France, 2004; 368 pp; €25)

Agricultural Biodiversity in Smallholder Farms of East Africa by Fidelis Kaihura and Michael Stocking (UN University Press, Tokyo, Japan, 2003; 304 pp; $32.00)

Asia and Africa in the Global Economy by Ernest Aryeetey, Julius Court, Machiko Nissanke and Beatrice Weder (UN University Press, Tokyo, Japan, 2003; 400 pp; $42.00)

International Waters in Southern Africa, ed. Mikiyasu Nakayama (UN University Press, Tokyo, Japan, 2003; 240 pp; $21.95)

Développement durable? doctrines, pratiques, évaluations, ed. Jean-Yves Martin (IRD Editions Diffusion, Bondy, France, 2002; 344 pp; €25)

Reforming Africa's Institutions: Ownership, Incentives, and Capabilities, ed. Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa (UN University Press, Tokyo, Japan, 2003; 440 pp; $37.95)

A Day in the Life of Africa by David Elliot Cohen, Lee Liberman and Charles M. Collins (Tides Foundation, San Francisco, California, USA, 2002; 288 pp; hb $50.00)

Le district sanitaire urbain en Afrique subsaharienne: Enjeux, pratiques et politiques by Daniel Grodos (Karthala, Paris, France, 2004; 448 pp; €28)

Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda by Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire (Random House Canada, Toronto, Canada, 2003; 562 pp; $25.95)

Reconsidering Informality: Perspectives from Urban Africa, ed. Karen Tranberg Hansen and Mariken Vaa (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, Sweden, 2004; 235 pp; €25)

L'Afrique de l'Ouest dans la compétition mondiale: Quels atouts possibles? by Jacqueline Damon and John O. Igue (Karthala, Paris, France, 2004; 503 pp; €32)

In Defence of Globalization by Jagdish N. Bhagwati (Oxford Press, Oxford, UK, 2004, 310pp; $28)

Angola: The Anatomy of an Oil State by Tony Hodges (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, US, 2004; 280 pp; $22.95)

Global Prescriptions: Gendering Health and Human Rights by Rosalind Pollack Petchesky (Zed Books, London, UK, 2003; 320 pp; $24.95)

The Quest for Peace in Africa: Transformations, Democracy and Public Policy by Alfred G. Nhema (International Books, Utrecht, Netherlands, 2004; 416 pp; $29.95)

Once Intrepid Warriors: Gender, Ethnicity and the Cultural Politics of Maasai Development by Dorothy L. Hodgson (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, USA, 2004; 333 pp; $19.95)

Land, Gender, and the Periphery: Themes in the History of Eastern and Southern Africa by Bahru Zewde (Ossrea, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2004; 178 pp; $15)

Rwanda: A Country Torn Apart by Kari Bodnarchuk (Minneapolis, Minnesota, US, 1999; 104 pp; $25.26)

Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress, ed. Jean Allman (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, US, 2004; 248 pp; $21.95)

A Continent for the Taking: The Tragedy and Hope of Africa by Howard W. French (Knopf, New York, NY, USA, 2004; 304 pp; $25)

Local Economic Development in the Changing World, ed. Etienne Nel and Christian M. Rogerson (Transaction Publishers, Piscataway, New Jersey, US, 2004; 352 pp; $49.95)

The Red Sea Terror Triangle by Shaul Shay (Transaction Publishers, Piscataway, New Jersey, US, 2005; 225 pp; $39.95)

African Entrepreneurship and Private Sector Development, ed. Karl Wohlmuth (Transaction Publishers, Piscataway, New Jersey, US, 2004; 696 pp; $89.95)

AFRICA IN BRIEF

WTO rules against cotton subsidies

Brazil has won a case at the World Trade Organization (WTO) challenging subsidies paid out to cotton farmers in the US. If upheld on appeal, the decision may force the US to amend its farm payment policies. It could also prompt more challenges from other developing countries, which argue that the $300 bn in farm subsidies provided annually in developed countries promote excess production, depress world markets and give an unfair advantage to farmers in wealthy nations. Under the terms of the WTO's 1995 Agreement on Agriculture, countries were allowed, for a period, to continue agricultural supports provided they capped subsidies at their 1992 levels. Brazil argued that the US breached its 1992 cap and that as a result Brazil lost $600 mn in potential revenue in the 2001/02 season.

US cotton subsidies also were singled out at the WTO ministerial meeting in Cancún, Mexico, in September 2003, when several West African cotton-exporting countries called for their repeal. The dispute is one of several points threatening to derail the current Doha round of negotiations, scheduled to be concluded by 2005. ■

Botswana tops Africa business survey

Good governance and a business-friendly macroeconomic climate made Botswana number one in the World Economic Forum's annual Africa Growth Competitiveness Index this year, as the country most likely to enjoy sustained economic growth. To arrive at the ratings, the index combines assessments of a country's public institutions, macroeconomic record and technological sophistication with an opinion survey of some 2,000 African business executives. It was released at the Forum's Africa Economic Summit in Maputo, Mozambique, in early June.

Finland, the US and Sweden led the global ratings, with Botswana ranked 36 of the 102 countries surveyed. The Swiss-based Forum's chief economist, Mr. Augusto Lopez-Claros, said the purpose of the index was to identify obstacles to growth and help governments, the private sector and donors make Africa a more attractive "business address" for investors. "African countries do not on the whole perform well in the study," he noted. ■

Africa competitiveness index ranking

	Africa	World
Botswana	1	36
Tunisia	2	38
South Africa	3	42
Mauritius	4	46
Namibia	5	52
Gambia	6	55
Egypt	7	58
Morocco	8	61
Tanzania	9	69
Ghana	10	71

Source: World Economic Forum

South-South trade talks launched

Leaders of developing nations, meeting at the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Brazil in June, launched new negotiations aimed at stimulating South-South trade. The talks are within the framework of the Global System of Trade Preferences, which currently involves 44 developing countries, 14 of them African. At the June 13-18 conference in São Paulo, the 44 countries urged other developing nations to join the talks, which are aimed at reducing tariffs among participants. China said it would seriously consider the invitation.

The World Trade Organization reports that trade among developing countries doubled during the 1990s, accounting for 12 per cent of world trade. Yet developing countries still face high trade barriers when exporting to each other.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni challenged larger developing countries to open their markets to poorer ones. He noted that while China charges no tariffs on raw coffee, it slaps 53 per cent duties on the processed product. "Africa has been standing with China for a long time and China was standing with us," he said. However, "the issue of trade . . . has not been addressed." ■

Group of Eight takes up Africa initiatives

Following up on the last two summits of the Group of Eight industrialized countries, this year's G-8 meeting in the US also put Africa prominently on the agenda. Six African heads of state — from Algeria, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda — were invited to the 9-10 June meeting in Sea Island, Georgia, where they again promoted the need for more support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The G-8 leaders agreed to several new initiatives on Africa:

- An action plan to train an additional 75,000 peacekeeping troops over the next five years. The plan's focus will be on Africa, extending a commitment made last year to help the African Union create a standby peacekeeping force.
- A "global HIV vaccine enterprise" to stimulate research into the development of a vaccine against the virus which causes AIDS.
- An initiative to "end the cycle of famine in the Horn of Africa," which will include measures to attain food security for 5 million more Ethiopians by 2009 and to raise agricultural productivity in the region.
- A commitment to ensure full funding for the World Health Organization's polio eradication campaign.
- An agreement to extend to 2006 the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, which was originally set to expire at the end of 2004. According to official estimates, HIPC so far has brought $31 bn in debt reduction to 27 countries, 23 of them in Africa.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in a letter to the G-8 leaders, urged them to make poverty reduction and other Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) more central in their assistance to developing countries. He cited estimates that global aid would need to rise to at least $100 bn, from the 2003 level of $68 bn, in order to reach the MDG targets by 2015. To raise additional funds for fighting poverty, French President Jacques Chirac proposed an international tax, but he did not receive sufficient support from other G-8 leaders.

South African President Thabo Mbeki called on the G-8 countries to end their trade-protectionist measures so that African countries can have "equitable access to world markets." The G-8 members declared that they are "determined" to resume the international trade negotiations that broke down in September 2003.

AFRICA WATCH

AFRICAN UNION

Peace and Security Council launched

The African Union commemorated Africa Day this year by inaugurating its new Peace and Security Council. The body will have the authority to intervene to prevent and resolve conflicts, and will eventually set up a standing African peacekeeping force. AU officials note that the Council sets the AU apart from its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity (OAU). "It will no longer be business as usual in our collective response to conflicts in Africa," said Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, who chaired the Council at its launch in 25 May. "The legitimate expectation of the international community is that the Council should make a lot of difference from the way we handled conflicts in the past. Their hopes and expectations must not be dashed."

The Council is made up of 15 countries taken from the five regions of Africa — Central, East, North, South and West. Five states (Gabon, Ethiopia, Algeria, South Africa and Nigeria) were elected to serve for three-year terms, while 10 others will sit on the Council for two years (Cameroon, Congo, Kenya, Sudan, Libya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Ghana, Senegal and Togo).

Not only will the new body be able to send in peacekeepers where ceasefires have been signed, but it also has the authority to intervene unilaterally in cases of genocide and crimes against humanity. By 2010, the AU intends to have its own standby army of 15,000 soldiers, ready for rapid deployment. "In the past, the OAU was accused of complicity. We are replacing the principle of non-interference with the principle of non-indifference," said AU Peace and Security Commissioner Said Djinnit.

The AU recently sent a mediation mission to the war-ravaged region of Darfur, in Sudan. It also has a mission in the Comoros. Its mission in Burundi, where a 2,700-strong AU force has been stationed since 2003, was recently handed over to a UN peacekeeping force. ■

NEPAD

'Peer review' kicks off in Ghana

A high-level African team visited Ghana on 25 May to begin preparations for examining that country's record on human rights, democracy, economic transparency and other governance issues. In announcing the mission, Mr. Wiseman Nkuhlu, chair of the steering committee of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), said that it marked an important step for the pan-African plan.

Recognizing that good governance is central not only to the continent's long-term development but also to attracting foreign investment and aid, African countries have established the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), within the NEPAD framework. It is a system of voluntary "self-monitoring" by which African countries review each others' political and economic management. In each review, a team of experts will spend several months gathering documentation and interviewing government, opposition, civil society and media representatives.

Ghana is the first country to be reviewed, and will be followed over the next year by Kenya, Rwanda and Mauritius. Fourteen others have officially joined the APRM: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda. Angola and Lesotho have also signalled their intention to join. ■

LEAST DEVELOPED

Strong growth amid poverty

The world's 50 least developed countries (LDCs) — 34 of which are in Africa — enjoyed strong economic growth between 1998 and 2002, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) reports. Real GDP growth in the LDCs averaged 4.4 per cent in 1998-2000 compared to a world average of 3.4 per cent. The LDCs did even better over 2000-2002, growing at an average 4.9 per cent, while global GDP rose just 1.4 per cent.

According to UNCTAD's *Least Developed Countries Report 2004*, released in late May, the LDCs were bolstered by a nearly 45 per cent increase in export receipts. In addition, net resource flows to LDCs rose from $12.4 bn in 2000 to a record $16.7 bn in 2002. Of the latter amount, $11.6 bn, or nearly 70 per cent, came from official development assistance, which in absolute terms is still below its average level in the early 1990s. The remainder came from private flows — overwhelmingly foreign investment — which have been increasingly significant over the past decade and reached $5.1 bn in 2002.

Still, UNCTAD cautions that the number of people in the LDCs living on $1 a day or less may increase from 335 million in 2000 to 471 million by 2015. ■

APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Rodrigo de Rato y Figaredo *has been selected by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Executive Board to serve as the Fund's new managing director, as of 7 June 2004. He succeeds Mr. Horst Köhler, who resigned to run for the presidency of Germany. Prior to taking up his position at the IMF, Mr. Rato was Spain's vice-president for economic affairs and minister of the economy. He was Spain's representative on the boards of governors of the IMF, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, European Investment Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.*

The UN Secretary-General has appointed **Ms. Carolyn McAskie** *as his special representative for Burundi, effective 1 June 2004. Ms. McAskie was previously active in the Burundi peace process in the 1990s, during the mediation efforts of the late former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere. She joined the UN in 1999, as deputy to the under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, after 32 years of service with the government of Canada. She was the UN's emergency relief coordinator from November 1999 to January 2004 and, holding the rank of assistant secretary-general, served concurrently as the Secretary-General's humanitarian envoy for Côte d'Ivoire.*